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Status of the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery

Report of the Secretary-General**

Contents

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	Mandate of the Fund	1	1
II.	Administration and Board of Trustees	2–3	1
III.	Beneficiaries	4	1
IV.	Grants cycle	5	1
V.	Payment of contributions	6	1
VI.	Fifth session of the Board (7-10 February 2000)	7–10	3
VII.	Approval of recommendations and implementation	11-12	4
VIII.	Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery	13-17	4
IX.	Needs assessment	18-20	5
X.	Fund raising for the sixth session of the Board of Trustees	21-23	5
XI.	How to contribute	24-25	6
XII.	Additional information	26	6

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** In accordance with General Assembly resolution 54/248, sect. C, para. 1, this report is being submitted on 18 July 2000 so as to include as much updated information as possible.

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I. Mandate of the Fund

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 46/122 of 17 December 1991, established the United Nations Voluntary Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery (hereinafter "the Fund") with the purpose of assisting representatives of non-governmental organizations from different regions which deal with issues of contemporary forms of slavery to participate in the deliberations of the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery (hereinafter "the Working Group") by providing them with financial assistance and to extend humanitarian, legal and financial aid, through established channels of assistance, to individuals whose human rights have been violated as a result of contemporary forms of slavery. Funding is obtained by means of voluntary contributions from Governments, non-governmental organizations, other private or public entities and individuals.

II. Administration and Board of Trustees

2. In conformity with the above-mentioned resolution, the Fund is administered in accordance with the relevant financial regulations and rules of the United Nations on general trust funds, by the Secretary-General, through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, with the advice of a Board of Trustees (hereinafter "the Board").

3. The Board is composed of five United Nations experts with relevant experience in the field of human rights and, in particular, with issues of contemporary forms of slavery, serving in their personal capacities. The current members of the Board, appointed by the Secretary-General for a three-year renewable term, in consultation with the Chairman of the Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, with due regard to equitable geographical distribution are: Swami Agnivesh (Chairman; India); Theo van Boven (Netherlands); Cheikh Saad-Bouh Kamara (Mauritania); Tatiana Matveeva (Russian Federation); and José de Souza Martins (Brazil).

III. Beneficiaries

4. In accordance with the selection criteria adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 46/122, the beneficiaries of assistance from the Fund shall be in the opinion of the Board: representatives of non-governmental organizations dealing with issues of contemporary forms of slavery who would not, in the opinion of the Board, be able to attend the session of the Working Group without the assistance provided by the Fund and who would be able to contribute to a deeper knowledge on the part of the Working Group of the problems relating to contemporary forms of slavery; and individuals whose human rights have been severely violated as a result of contemporary forms of slavery.

IV. Grants cycle

5. Applications for travel and for project grants must be submitted , by 15 September 2000, for analysis by the secretariat of the Fund and Board to the Trust Funds Unit, Support Service Branch, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Geneva (see contact details in paras. 24-25 below). Admissible applications will be examined by the Board at its next session, scheduled to take place in the last week of January 2001. The Board will adopt at that session recommendations for grants which will be submitted for approval to the High Commissioner on behalf of the Secretary-General. The grants approved should be paid in February/March 2001. Beneficiaries of project grants have then to provide satisfactory narrative and financial reports on the use of their grants before 1 December 2001. Until satisfactory reports on the use of previous grants are received, no new project grant can be paid.

V. Payment of contributions

6. In order to meet the requirements of the above-mentioned grant's cycle and to meet new requests for financing during a current year, new voluntary contributions should be paid to the Fund by the end of November in order to be duly recorded by the United Nations Treasurer well in advance of the annual session of the Board. Contributions which can not be recorded before the session of the Board will be carried over to the following year.

VI. Fifth session of the Board (7-10 February 2000)

7. During eight meetings, the Board examined information prepared by its secretariat concerning the financial situation of the Fund and new applications for grants. The Board also revised the implementation by its secretariat of recommendations approved at the fourth session, in 1999. In that respect, the Board noted with satisfaction that all beneficiaries had implemented the projects in good faith. The Board heard the secretariat of the Working Group and the Committee on the Rights of the Child on questions of common interest for the three organs. The Board also met with representatives of Terre des hommes (Switzerland), an international non-governmental organization acting as an established channel of assistance for a non-governmental organization that received a grant from the Fund in 1999, Foyer Maurice Sixto (Haiti). The Board also held its annual meeting with donors.

8. The following contributions were available at the fifth session of the Board:

Table 1
Contributions[a] available at the fifth session of the Board in February 2000, as at 6 February 2000
(United States dollars)

States[b]	*Amount*	*Paid on*	*Paid in New York or Geneva*	*Contribution number*
France	16 357	29 April 1999	Geneva	2nd
Holy See	1 000	30 December 1999	Geneva	1st
Ireland	26 386	1 December 1999	Geneva	2nd
Netherlands	34 799	20 January 2000	Geneva	2nd
Poland	5 000	6 October 1999	Geneva	1st
Saudi Arabia	10 000	22 July 1999	Geneva	1st
South Africa	7 589	7 April 1999	Geneva	2nd
Subtotal	**101 131**			
Non-governmental organizations and individuals	*Amount*	*Paid on*	*Paid in New York or Geneva*	*Contribution number*
Students at Instituto Tecnico Commerciale Statal O. Romero (Albino, Italy)	528	27 December 1999	Geneva	3rd
Japanese Workers Committee for Human Rights (Tokyo)	671	30 August 1999	Geneva	1st
Mr. Trento Longaretti[c] (Bergamo, Italy)	3 145	8 December 1999	Geneva	1st
Mr. Sadiq M. Marafi (Geneva)	993	7 September 1999	Geneva	2nd
Operazione Terzo Mondo (Albino, Italy)	1 000	10 June 1999	Geneva	2nd
Mr. Yorio Shiokawa (Aichi-Ken, Japan)	336	30 August 1999	Geneva	2nd
Women's World Summit Foundation (Geneva)	2 815	22 June 1999	Geneva	1st
Subtotal	**9 488**			
Grand total	**110 619**			

[a] According to official receipt vouchers available at OHCHR.

[b] The following additional contributions by States were also paid in time but not yet officially recorded by the United Nations Treasurer: Japan $53,000; Kuwait $25,152. Although the official receipt vouchers were received later on, the contributions were considered for the allotment of grants.

[c] Mr. Trento Longaretti, a well-known Italian painter, who organized together with the Italian Permanent Mission, an exhibition of his works of art at the Palais des Nations and at the Palais Wilson in Geneva, decided to donate the proceeds of the sale of several books to the Fund. The Board of Trustees of the Fund appreciated this initiative and thanked Mr. Longaretti very much.

9. The Board of Trustees examined 43 new admissible applications for travel grants to attend the twenty-fifth session of the Working Group (14-23 June 2000), amounting to approximately $113,059, and 25 new applications for project grants, amounting to approximately $552,236.

10. After having examined the applications in the light of the established criteria for selection, the Board recommended 17 travel grants, amounting to $30,800 to enable representatives of non-governmental organizations to participate in the twenty-fifth session of the Working Group. The Board also recommended

17 project grants amounting to $83,500. The total amount for travel and project grants recommended in 2000 was $114,300. The list of beneficiaries is available in the report of the Secretary-General to the Commission on Human Rights.[1] The list of travel grants approved[2] gives the names of the organizations, the names of representatives and the theme to be discussed at the Working Group. The list of project grants gives the names of the organizations, the titles of the projects or aspects covered, and the amounts of the grants.

VII. Approval of recommendations and implementation

11. All the recommendations made by the Board at its fifth session were approved on 17 February 2000 by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on behalf of the Secretary-General. By 5 July 2000, all the project and travel grants had been paid. The Board approved recommendations that the Chairman or a member of the Board should continue to be given an opportunity by the Bureau to deliver a brief speech to the Commission on Human Rights, under the relevant agenda item, in order to inform the Commission about its work and the financial situation of the Fund and to introduce the relevant note on the Fund by the secretariat to the Commission; and that applications for project grants for 2001 can ask for a maximum of $15,000.[3]

12. The Board noted with satisfaction that, thanks to the receipt of new contributions from regular and new donors (including Governments, non-governmental organizations, Italian students and other individuals) and an increase in the number of new applications from non-governmental organizations, it has been able to recommend more grants than in the previous years. Table 2 below shows the increase.

Table 2
Grants approved, 1997-2000
(United States dollars)

Year	*Grant*
1997	28 850
1998	-
1999	40 505
2000	114 300

VIII. Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery

13. Fifteen of the 18 beneficiaries of travel grants were able to participate in the twenty-fifth session of the Working Group, held in Geneva from 14 to 23 July 2000. The grants of the beneficiaries who were not able to travel to Geneva were cancelled. According to the agenda of the Working Group and the theme of the speech of the beneficiaries, 12 beneficiaries were asked to participate in the Working Group from 14 to 16 June, and they contributed to the discussions of the Working Group on its main theme, bonded labour and debt bondage, and on issues such as domestic child workers. The other six beneficiaries participated in the Working Group from 19 to 21 June to discuss issues such as sexual exploitation, especially of children, and trafficking in persons. Among the beneficiaries, there were three former victims of contemporary forms of slavery who brought their testimony to the attention of the Working Group.

14. Under item 7 of its agenda, the Working Group reviewed the activities and status of the Fund. The Chairman of the Board, Swami Agnivesh, and another member, Ms. Tatiana Matveeva, were able to attend the Working Group at their own expense. They met with the beneficiaries from the Fund. They introduced the reports of the Secretary-General (E/CN.4/2000/80 and E/CN.4/2000/80/Add.1) on the Fund, thanked the donors to the Fund and appealed for new and regular contributions to the Fund. Under this agenda item, the Secretary of Fund and Board was also asked to provide relevant additional information on the current financial status of the Fund.

15. Members of the Working Group, beneficiaries, international non-governmental organizations and

donors praised the Fund and Board for the increased participation of beneficiaries, which contributed to a deeper knowledge on the part of the Working Group of the local, subregional and regional situations. The deliberations of the Working Group and its recommendations will be available in the report of the Working Group (E/CN.4/Sub.2/2000...) to the next session of the Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (31 July to 18 August 2000).

16. The Working Group expressed its gratitude to Governments, organizations and individuals, including young students, who contributed to the Fund and encouraged them to continue doing so. The Working Group also expressed its appreciation for the participation of about 20 representatives of non-governmental organizations financed by the Fund, including victims of contemporary forms of slavery, and for their valuable contribution to its work. The Working Group invited the Board to promote the participation of individuals and organizations to the annual sessions of the Working Group from as large a number of countries as possible, in accordance with the priorities established in its agenda. The Working Group also noted with satisfaction that about 20 project grants were paid by the Fund to local non-governmental organizations that work on issues of contemporary forms of slavery. It expressed its deep appreciation for the participation of the Chairperson and a member of the Board who attended the session at their own expense and invited the Board members to participate at its twenty-sixth session, at which it decided to continue to examine the situation and activities of the Fund.

17. The Working Group expressed its support to the work of the members of the Board, in particular, their fund-raising activities, and recalled the appeal made by the General Assembly in its resolution 46/122 to all Governments, non-governmental organizations, other private or public entities and individuals to contribute to the Fund to fulfil its mandate effectively in the year 2001.

IX. Needs assessment

18. Applications for grants received in 2000 amounted to about $700,000. In the Board's view, in order to be able to fulfil its mandate satisfactorily, the Fund will need $300,000 more before the sixth session of the Board, scheduled to take place during the last week of January 2001.

19. As at 4 July 2000, the contributions shown in table 3 had been paid and are available for the sixth session of the Board.

Table 3
Contributions available for the sixth session of the Board, as at 4 July 2000[a]
(United States dollars)

States	*Amount*	*Paid in New York or Geneva*	*Paid on*
Japan	50 000	New York	9 June 2000
Subtotal	**50 000**		
Non-governmental organizations and individuals	*Amount*	*Paid in New York or Geneva*	*Paid on*
Students of the Archway School, United Kingdom	1 000	Geneva	23 June 2000
Mr. Daniel Prémont	120	Geneva	29 March 2000
Ms. Halima Warzazi	500	Geneva	19 June 2000
Subtotal	**1 620**		
Grand total	**51 620**		

[a] According to information available at OHCHR.

20. As at 4 July 2000, new pledges to the Fund had been made by the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya ($5,000) and the Japanese Workers Committee for Human Rights from Tokyo (200,000 yen).

X. Fund-raising for the sixth session of the Board of Trustees (January 2001)

21. At its fifth session, the Board thanked the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for having sent in October 1999 a letter to assist them in their fund-raising efforts, appealing for new contributions. The Board recommended that the United Nations High Commissioner send a new letter of appeal to donors for additional contributions, to be paid, if possible, by the end of November, to allow the Board to recommend a further increase in the number of grants.

22. In its resolution 1999/18, of 25 August 1999, on the Fund, the Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, inter alia, noted with satisfaction the participation of the representatives of non-governmental organizations financed by the Fund and their valuable contribution to the work of the Working Group and encouraged their activities. The Subcommission also expressed its satisfaction to the donor Governments, non-governmental organizations and individuals — in particular, to the new donors — for their valuable contributions and urged all Governments, non-governmental organizations, other private or public entities and individuals to contribute annually in order to enable the Fund to fulfil its mandate effectively. The Subcommission emphasized the need for contributions to be paid on a regular basis and, if possible, before the end of the current year. The Chairperson of the Working Group, Ms. Halima Warzazi, stressed during the session that the support of the Fund to the Working Group greatly contributed to a deeper knowledge on the part of the Working Group of the problems relating to contemporary forms of slavery in a larger number of countries, in conformity with the mandate of the Fund.

23. In accordance with their mandate, the Board members continued to develop several initiatives to make the activities of the Fund and Board better known and to obtain new contributions, by, inter alia, widening the donor base and obtaining the support of young persons, the non-governmental organizations community concerned, and the public at large. The secretariat of the Board and Fund also contributed in this respect by providing all information available on the Fund to interested and potential donors.

XI. How to contribute to the Fund

24. Voluntary contributions to the United Nations "humanitarian assistance" Trust Funds can be made by bank transfer to the United Nations Geneva General Fund

(a) In United States dollars (US$):

c/o Chase Manhattan Bank, New York
A/C: 001-1-508629
UNOG General Fund
G/L: UN-0503456
United States Banking Code: 021000021;

(b) In Swiss francs (CHF):

c/o UBS AG
P.O. Box 2770, CH 1211 Geneva 2
Acc. 240-CO-590-160.0
Swift address: UBSWCHZH12A

25. Contributions can also be made by cheque to the order of the United Nations. Send the cheque to

(a) Cashier's Office
United Nations
New York, NY 10017, USA

or

(b) Treasurer
United Nations Office at Geneva
Palais des Nations
CH-1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

On the cheque, indicate that it is for "the Slavery Fund, account SH".

XII. Additional information

26. For any additional information, please contact the secretariat of the Fund and Board at the Trust Fund Unit, Support Services Branch, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, CH-1211 Geneva 10. Tel. (41-22) 917 91 64; 917 91 45; 917 92 66. Fax (41-22) 917 90 17. E-mail: eortado-rosich.hchr@unog.ch; dpremont.hchr@unog.ch.

Notes

[1] See E/CN.4/2000/Add.1, annexes I and II.

[2] As requested by the Working Group, the Board duly noted in its recommendations on the applications received that the main theme of the twenty-fifth session of the Working Group was bonded labour and debt bondage.

[3] E/CN.4/2000/Add.1.